

05-311
Violet Ramis
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#3R-F
NYC,NY 10024

Dear FCC,

My name is Violet Ramis. I am a student and intern in the office of New York City Council Member Miguel Martinez who represents the Northern Manhattan communities of Washington Heights and Inwood. Through the Council Member's office, I also work with a coalition of local non-profit organizations, residents and other elected officials called C.O.D.E.S. (Community Outreach and Development Efforts Save). We focus on youth violence prevention through community building and collaboration.

C.O.D.E.S. is currently participating in the Manhattan Neighborhood Network's (MNN) Video Training program for community organizations. This training has been an invaluable experience for our coalition members. We have been introduced to the technical aspects of video production as well as to the importance of media as a tool for community organizing. We plan to use this training to document community events as well as produce programs that highlight and explore local resources and community needs in Washington Heights and Inwood.

Without Manhattan Neighborhood Network, and public access/PEG television in general, the voices and views of Washington Heights and Inwood would not have an easily available outlet for expression. Media has never played such an important role in society as it does today. Preserving and protecting Public Access television insures that diverse groups of people – rich, poor, young, old, immigrant, native, English speaking, Spanish/ Chinese/ Arabic/ Russian/ French/ Italian/ Korean/ Hebrew speaking,

Republican, Democrat, Green, Libertarian, gay, straight – will have the opportunity to participate in this country's dialogue and democracy.

Furthermore, PEG T.V. provides the only opportunity for local communities (elected officials, merchants, schools, neighborhood-based non-profit organizations) to represent themselves in the media. We need to see our problems approached from an empowerment perspective rather than the negative portrayals too often seen on network news . We need to see our City Council Members, Assemblymen, and other representatives given ample airtime so that more people can be aware of and participate in the political process. We need young people to be able to create and view programming that speaks specifically to their circumstances. We need more community-building and strengthening systems in place, not less.

Please take these issues into consideration when evaluating the importance of franchising rules. We need franchising rules that support access TV. Local municipalities must maintain the authority to require local video franchising. Weakening Public Access would weaken the very things that can make this country great – diversity, freedom of speech and equality. I hope that you will choose to support these essential ideals through your dedication to preserving Public, Educational & Governmental television.

Sincerely,

Violet Ramis